

Governor Markell Signs Executive Order Adding Business Owners with Disabilities and Small Businesses to Delaware's Supplier Diversity Efforts

Businesses owned by individuals with disabilities and certain small businesses will now be included in the state's supplier diversity efforts thanks to an executive order signed by Governor Jack Markell on March 26.

Present to celebrate the new Executive Order and the good work that will follow from it were members of the Governor's Supplier Diversity Council; two Cabinet Secretaries, Housing and Management and Budget, with their staff; supplier diversity liaisons from various state agencies; and iNovo Applications Inc., which is a start-up business that is eligible for both new programs created under the order.

Executive Order 44 expands the scope of the Governor's Supplier Diversity Council to include the study and consideration of how the State of Delaware does business with enterprises owned by individuals with disabilities as well as certain small businesses. The order also creates the new Small Business Focus (SBF) Program. Businesses are eligible for the SBF Program based upon their size, which is measured by the number of employees (between 25 and 250 FTEs) and gross sales averaged over a three year period (up to \$7 million). Any business in the SBF program must operate free from the control of a business larger than the eligibility size caps.

"We are committed to ensuring business owners with

disabilities and small businesses are afforded the same opportunities as others,” said Governor Markell. “This executive order goes a step further in assisting these businesses in procurement with the State.”

The goal of the Supplier Diversity Council is to advocate for supplier diversity initiatives, and because of the contribution business owners with disabilities and small businesses of varying sizes make to the economic strength of the state, members of the council felt it was time to recognize and assist them.

“Our mission is to assist the entire supplier diversity community in competing for the provision of public works, goods and services to state government. With the signing of this executive order by Governor Markell, we can now make a difference by including businesses owned by individuals with disabilities and small businesses eligible for the program,” said Michelle Morin, Executive Director of the Office of Supplier Diversity in the Office of Management and Budget.

The SBF Program will increase opportunity for small businesses to participate in state procurement by:

- Creating a registry of small businesses eligible for the program;
- Measuring and analyzing spend on current and future procurement with the businesses eligible for the program; and
- Revising agency Supplier Diversity Plans to direct state agencies to access the SBF Program Registry when making under-threshold procurements.

“The new Small Business Focus Program will increase the opportunities for the smaller small businesses to compete for under-threshold opportunities in state procurements,” said Ken Anderson, Chair of the Governor’s Supplier Diversity Council.

As part of Executive Order 44, all state executive agencies

will be asked in the coming months to modify their supplier diversity plans to include SBF Program companies in their under-threshold purchase outreach. Currently, for purchases under the threshold, procurement officers need to seek three quotes, and one of the three quotes must be from a business listed in the Directory of Diverse Suppliers, which will now include businesses owned by individuals with disabilities. Agencies are also being asked to add that the second of three quotes is sought from a business listed in the SBF Program.

For more information on the efforts of the Office of Supplier Diversity visit <http://gss.omb.delaware.gov/osd/index.shtml>.



Joining Governor Markell at the signing of Executive Order 44, are members of the Governor's Supplier Diversity Council; two Cabinet Secretaries, Housing and Management and Budget, with their staff; supplier diversity liaisons from various state agencies; and iNovo Applications Inc., which is a start-up business that is eligible for both new programs created under the order.